

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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FM USMISSION BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2596

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

CINCEUR FOR POLAD & OPS

CINCUSAREUR FOR POLAD OPS AND AEAGG-OCO

CINCUSAFE FOR POLAD & OPS

USELMLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 1890

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, WB, GE, UR

SUBJECT: INCIDENT AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 1700 LOCAL COTOBER 31,, US MP'S AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE WERE INFORMED BY TWO WEST BERLIN BUS-DRIVERS RETURNING FROM EAST BERLIN THAT A US SOLDIER HAD BEEN DETAINED AT LAST GUARD SHACK BY EAST GERMANS. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS GERMAN TOURIST REPORTED SEEING DETENTION BUT COULD NOT IDENTIFY INDIVIDUAL AS AMERICAN SOLDIER. ACCORDING TO CHECKPOINT LOG, NO US PERSONNEL WHO HAD ENTERED ON FOOT WERE IN EAST BERLIN AT TIME. AT 1720, US MP'S SAW PERSON COVERED WITH GOVERCOAT BEING ESCORTED BY FIVE EAST GERMAN OFFICERS FROM GUARD SHACK TO CUSTOMS BUILDING ACROSS STREET.

2. NCOIC CHECKPOINT CHARLIE ENTERED EAST BERLIN AND WALKED LENGTH OF CHECKPOINT LOOKING IN WINDOWS OF CUSTOMS BUILDING BUT WAS UNABLE TO OBSERVE ANYONE IN US UNIFORM. AT 1800 THREE TOURISTS REPORTED HAVING SEEN INDIVIDUAL IN US UNIFORM WITH BERLIN PATCH AND
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SERGEANT'S TRIPES IN CUSTOMS BUILDING. UPON OUR

INSTRUCTIONS, NCOIC RETURNED TO EAST GERMAN CHECKPOINT AND ENTERED CUSTOMS BUILDING. EAST GERMAN MAJOR IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS CHECKPOINT COMMANDER TO NCOIC, AND WHEN LATTER ASKED IF THERE WAS US SOLDIER IN BUILDING, MAJOR SUGGESTED THEY STEP INTO BACK ROOM TO TALK IN PRIVATE. IN OFFICE NCOIC ASKED AGAIN IF THERE WAS A US SOLDIER IN BUILDING AND MAJOR ANSWERED "NO." NCOIC THEN ASKED IF THERE WAS SOMEONE IN AMERICAN UNIFORM IN BUILDING AND MAJOR RESPONDED THAT THERE WAS NO US SOLDIER THERE.

3. INASMUCH AS ALL LOGGED US TRAVELLERS HAD RETURNED FROM EAST BERLIN AND IN VIEW OF CAREFUL WORDING OF EAST GERMAN MAJOR' SECOND ANSWER, WE BELIEVED THAT WERE PROBABLY DEALING WITH UNSUCCESSFUL ESCAPE ATTEMPT IN US UNIFORM SIMILAR TO THAT REPORTED BERLIN 1340 (NOTAL). WE THOUGHT IT PRUDENT, HOWEVER, TO MAKE AN APPROACH TO SOVIETS IN VIEW OF FIRM EYEWITNESSES' REPORTS AND POSSIBILITY THAT A US SOLDIER HAD MANAGED TO ENTER EAST BERLIN BY S-OR U-BAHN OR ON TOURIST BUS. ACCORDINGLY, US PROTOCOL OFFICER ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT SOVIET COUNTERPART THAT EVENING, BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL. WHEN SOVIET PROTOCOL OFFICER (ROMANOVSKIY) WAS FINALLY REACHED MID-AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 1, US PROTOCOL OFFICER RELATED TO HIM CIRCUMSTANCES OF APPARENT DETENTION, AND REQUESTED THAT SOVIET AUTHORITIES INVESTIGATE MATTER AND INFORM US MISSION PROMPTLY OF RESULTS. IF US SOLDIER WAS IN FACT BEING DETAINED, WE SAID WE WOULD EXPECT HIM TO BE RETURNED PROMPTLY TO US CUSTODY. ROMANOVSKIY POSED USUAL QUESTION AS TO WHETHER WE HAD CONTACTED GDR AUTHORITIES, BUT, AFTER HAVING RECEIVED STANDARD REPLY, AGREED TO TRY TO INVESTIGATE MATTER ON OUR BEHALF.

4. SUBSEQUENT TO PREPARATION OF ABOVE, U.S. CITIZEN AMELIA MEISSNER, BORN FEBRUARY 23, 1954, SAN FRANCISCO, PASSPORT NUMBER B54 1046, ISSUED MARCH 19, 1941, RESIDENT IN WEST BERLIN, INFORMED U.S. CONSUL THAT SHE WAS ENGAGED TO JUERGEN VICARI, AND ACTOR IN EAST BERLIN THEATER GROUP, ACCORDING TO MISS MEISSNER, VICARI HAD OBTAINED A U.S. ARMY UNIFORM AND SHE AND SEVERAL

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WEST BERLIN FRIENDS HAD TAKEN VARIOUS PATCHES AND BADGES TO HIM. SHE SAID VICARI HAD PLANNED TO WALK THROUGH CHECKPOINT CHARLIE AT 1700 OCTOBER 31, BUT HE HAD NOT APPEARED IN WEST BERLIN AND SHE FEARED THAT HE HAD RUN INTO SOME DIFFICULTY.

5. CONSUL WARNED MISS MEISSNER NOT TO ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO EAST BERLIN TO LOOK FOR FIANCE. WE WILL

CALL HER IN TOMORROW TO TELL HER WHAT WE KNOW OF
CASE AND STATE THAT SINCE VOPOS HAVE OBVIOUSLY
CAUGHT AND INTERROGATED VICARI, IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE
FOR HER EITHER TO VISIT EAST
BERLIN AGAIN OR ATTEMPT TO LEAVE WEST BERLIN
BY SURFACE ROUTE.

6. USCOB CONCURS.KLEIN

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